

WRITTEN REPLY

To the Examiner of the Patent Office

1. International Application No.

PCT/JP03/05966

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4. Date of Notice 14. 10. 03 (Mailing date)

5. Contents of Reply

We have received a PCT Opinion under Article 13 (PCT Rule 66) regarding the international application and the like pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Our reply is as follows.

(1) In the submitted Amendment, claims are amended as follows.

(i) In claim 1, the phrase "the reinforcing frame is a plastic molding, the case element is a press-formed product made of a metal thin plate, and the case element is formed so as to be integrated with the reinforcing frame" is inserted after "a reinforcing frame fixed to the case element along a circumference of a swelling wall of the housing portion".

(ii) Claim 2 is cancelled.

(iii) New claim 8 is added.

(2) According to the Opinion, claim 1 lacks novelty and inventiveness over the description of Document 1 (JP 2000-182579A).

However, Document 1 merely describes "a plate-shaped polymer electrolyte battery comprising a plate-shaped power-generating element provided with a terminal for external connection, a reinforcing member placed so as to surround at least an outer circumferential edge of the power-generating element, and a polymer sealant for sealing the power-generating element while leading the terminal for external connection" (claim 1), and "furthermore, a frame type reinforcing member 8 is placed so as to be engaged with a projecting entire outer circumferential edge of the power-generating element 1, and is attached to the surface of a polymer sealing film 6a so as to reinforce the film 6a" (paragraph 0034). Document 1 does not describe that "the reinforcing frame is a plastic molding, the case element is a press-formed product made of a metal thin plate, and the case element is formed so as to be integrated with the reinforcing frame" recited in claim 1 of the present invention. In this respect, the present invention exhibits the function and effect of being able to have sufficient structural strength while the total thickness of the battery is minimized. Furthermore, by integrally molding the case element with the reinforcing frame, the number of processing of the first case body or the second case body can be reduced, and the positioning accuracy between the case element and the reinforcing frame also is enhanced.

Accordingly, we believe that claim 1 has novelty and inventiveness.

(3) According to the Opinion, claims 3 to 5 lack inventiveness over the descriptions of Document 1, Document 2 (EP1035597A1), and Document 3 (EP1033766A1). Furthermore, claim 6 lacks inventiveness over Document 1, Document 4 (EP778627A1), and Document 5 (EP786821A1), and claim 7 lacks inventiveness over the descriptions of Document 1, Document 6 (JP5-28978A), and Document 7 (JP10-334871A).

However, claims 3 to 7 are dependent upon claim 1 directly or indirectly. Herein, claim 1 has inventiveness as described above. Therefore, we believe that claims 3 to 7 dependent upon claim 1 also have inventiveness.